

nature—art always more noble than mere craftsmanship, however excellent.

Leaving, then, the learning of the practical professional knowledge out of present account, seeing that with proper use of the means provided there is not much left to desire,—and thus confining our notice more to the study of the fine-art of architectural design,—it comes now to be observed that in this subject the self-instruction, which has been mentioned as a principle in our society, is an especially valuable one. For although I would be very glad to see our scheme so well supported as to carry out a full system of classes with a full catalogue of teachers,—yet when we remember that Art lies, not in the mere obtaining of knowledge of facts or the acquirement of skill in operation, by laid-down rule and rote, but in attaining a power of invention—fancy—creation—whose mode of action will perhaps for ever be mysterious more than intelligible, and seem more to exist in incomprehensible accident and caprice than by systematic mental rule, then it will appear how much depends on something beyond the mere instruction in criticism which is the utmost province of the teachable in Art, and how eminently, when the acquirement is so subtle a thing as fancy, the means must lie more in self-education by careful observation and thought—self-dependent and within, than in any thing which can be communicated by systematic instruction, from without.

Then the peculiar necessity for self-reliance which I spoke of is constituted simply in this fact,—that the fine-art of architectural design, in the full breadth and depth of a fine-art, is in the present system entirely untaught and even strangely denied existence. To my perhaps sanguine mind I will confess the signs of the times give credited evidence, that the rising generation of architects will be much more artists than we are. It would take a long time to explain it,—and it may seem an affectation or a vagary to say it,—but still I will not hesitate to affirm that when our successors point back to our nineteenth century of architecture, it will be as to a chaos before the sun of the true spirit of art had begun to shine—a period wherein the fine-art in the nature of a fine-art was almost inconceivably unknown. Works will be produced within perhaps the century, which we do not dream of,—creations so novel and superior that, unaccustomed to think of novelty in its true principles, we are perfectly unfit to conceive of such. And therefore the great glory of self-reliance in our youth. With fancy yet uncorrupted by our habits of copyism and rote,—energy yet uncramped by dogmatism and specious fallacy,—let them have full free scope in bold exercise of thought, and proud unbroken confidence in the boundless power of Mind.

And they who are to be more spectators of our attempt than actors in it,—who are our judges rather than ourselves,—you will not think that our self-education is an idle caprice, or our self-reliance an empty boast. You will not reject our scheme for what is rather its broad basis and its good foundation. Every liberal mind will encourage us. To afford our pupils the means, on a large scale, of mutual aid in their professional knowledge is one good object, first. To provide the means of better education in that artistic power in which education is so much neglected, is another and a nobler object, secondly. To lay the groundwork of a grand advance in the Art itself is yet another and yet a nobler object, thirdly. And for these our three good objects, if we are to succeed, we must have at least the good will and the kind word of our superiors and fathers. Our self-education does not imply any want of reverence for the authoritative and experienced,—nor our self-reliance any lack of appreciation of their sympathy and encouragement and guidance.

Such are the views which individually I have to offer as my contribution to the general counsels. I have not enlarged upon details, because I would avoid tedium. We are not without details, but the general spirit is as yet the chief consideration. Nor have I even exhausted the subject generally. I might have spoken of that valuable principle,—the application of the plan of mutual instruction by discussion to the period of life when it is the most servicable, most provocative of energy, and most practicable in respect of leisure and inclination; but I have on other occasions laid

out this argument already. I might also have entered into what may appear a necessary qualification to all that I have said,—that, although I have made mention generally of the pupil and the student, the scheme is meant to embrace not such alone as are generally termed so, but the whole of a much larger class. But what I have said will, I hope, have been sufficient for all the general exposition which could be attempted on such an occasion; and I have only to say in conclusion, that the project now I hope fairly to be tried, as it has been long a favourite subject of my castle-building in the air, is still an object of my most sincere and fervent hopes; and to express the trust that those who are potent to help will help willingly, as it is their duty,—and that those who are to carry out the operation of the scheme will carefully and energetically follow out the good purposes,—so that, as in the games of old, the ardour of youth may be stimulated by the encouragement of age, and the man of grey hairs, thinking of himself long ago, may look upon the young runner with kindness and pride.

The president said, that Professor Donaldson, who had favoured them with his presence that evening, had been invited to take the chair, but had paid the society the compliment to say, their own president was the proper person to do so: that gentleman, however, would probably give the meeting the benefit of some observations.

Mr. Donaldson said, he had availed himself with great pleasure, of the invitation to attend this first meeting of the society, for he felt that every association for self-improvement and mutual encouragement was of the utmost value, not merely to the student, but also to the masters in the art. This had led to the establishment of all the scientific societies in the metropolis. It was for this that the Institute of British Architects was founded.

Assuredly there is one great question, which above all now presses itself upon the consideration, and agitates the mind of every thoughtful architect. That is, are we to have an architecture of our period, a distinct individual palpable style of the 19th century? If so, from what types are we to derive a new inspiration for our conceptions, so as to give a character, that should at once indicate the epoch? Are we to go to the monuments of the classic times? Are we to adopt the gigantic and cumbersome style of Egypt, consisting of huge masses and gloomy though majestic effects? Assuredly not, with our advance in the science of construction, which dispenses with their heavy columns and enormous beams. Are we to go to the purer buildings of Greece, where a highly imaginative and critical people were able to appreciate the refinements of the most delicate detail? Are we to go to the gigantic and splendid edifices of the Romans with their vast extent and splendid marbles? But we have not like them provinces, whose riches we can apply to the embellishment of our metropolis. Alas! it is from the hard-earned savings of the people, that we must derive the means, and thus are limited to a niggardly expenditure in our public monuments inadequate to noble structures. But still, are our studies to have no reference to past times, and are we to reject the edifices of antiquity? No: they were the productions of great minds, and neglecting them, we foolishly forgo the experience of many ages and of thoughtful men, who had certain ends to realise and did so with the utmost skill. We must study their monuments to teach us how to think, but still not with the slavish abjection and pedantry of a school. Again, are we to found our conceptions upon tradition? But are our feelings the same as those of the times of traditions? Have we not other rules of judgment, other principles of action? We cannot then abide by mere tradition and precedent. The truth is, that we must go to Nature herself. We must study her in her most elegant, her noblest developments. We must consider our habits of private and public life. We must keep in view our moral, religious, and political institutions, and climate. And above all, we must remember the materials, those we have at hand, so different from those of past periods, particularly iron, which of itself is calculated to effect a revolution in the art. We must bear in mind that we have to create and not to copy. Thus, in looking at an edifice, we must not be content to sketch a base or a capital, or to measure an

elaborately traced window. This may render us skilful and elegant draughtsmen. But unless we seize their general principles, harmony, proportion, and beauty, we shall lose the main purpose of the thoughtful mind; which is to impress on the memory the leading combinations of the monument as a whole; and to learn to design with the same originality and like taste that our fathers have developed, when they created these admirable productions of their genius.

The great source of design exists primarily in geometric forms. And he thought that we lose much of the facility of composition by not habitually accustoming ourselves to study the combinations of the square, the parallelogram, the polygon, the circle and ellipse, and all the exquisite gradations of which they are capable. We should profit greedily, were we to make it our "ludus" or sport. He hoped he should be pardoned in offering these few suggestions, and they would not consider them dictated by too much of a professorial tone. But he imagined, that he could not better respond to the honour he had received in this invitation, than by following out the tone of thought which pervaded the admirable address which their president had just delivered. He had indulged in a poet's dream. Let us each endeavour to realise it by a new combination of all the arts of design, and by uniting to architecture the productions of the painter and sculptor, without whose aid no monument can be perfect.

Mr. Godwin, being called on, said it would be wrong if he were to lessen by any casual observations, the useful impressions which the addresses of the president and of Mr. Donaldson must have left on their minds. All would admit, even if unable to go the whole extent, in any respect, with the speakers, that the remarks thrown out were most suggestive, highly important in their results, and demanding serious consideration. Kindly called on as he had been, he could not, however, deny himself the pleasure of congratulating the society as well on the numerous attendance that evening, as on the interesting character of the works with which the walls were covered. He would take it as an omen of success. The subscription being so small, as they had wisely chosen to make it, numbers were absolutely necessary to enable them to carry out their views, and he could scarcely doubt that, offering as the society did, many advantages to several large classes of persons, these numbers would readily be obtained. Mutual instruction was laid down as the broad means of accomplishing the objects of the society; but it would be necessary, of course, to frame a plan of proceeding more in detail, and for this he should anxiously look. At the preliminary meeting for the establishment of the society, he had suggested that the Institute might be induced by proper representation and arrangement, to afford at all events a meeting place for the society, and the use of their valuable library. He still held the same view: rent was the clog on all societies. At all events it would of course be clearly understood that no feeling of opposition to the Institute existed; the society was intended for those to whom the former offered no assistance,—they were both at work on the same road, and if the society followed out efficiently the course it had laid down for itself, it might justly claim the applause and support of every member of the profession, and could scarcely fail to aid in advancing that art, the progress of which he, in common with the majority there, enthusiastically desired.

Thanks having been voted to the visitors and contributors, and to the president for his able address, the meeting was adjourned to the 22nd, when a paper will be read by Mr. J. D. Wyatt.

**IMPROVEMENT OF THE WORKING CLASSES.**—The Working-men's Association for their mental improvement is extending itself over the metropolis, and has several district libraries, circulating many thousands of volumes. It was originated, as we are informed, by the men in Messrs. Maudesley's employ, who at first contemplated nothing more than a little society for mutual instruction; but, a knowledge of it spreading, it was taken up by Lord Raglan and others, who interest themselves in the condition of the working classes.